



## Future Prospects of Library Acquisitions

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PIONEER AMERICAN UNIVERSITY and research librarians were strongly addicted to rugged individualism in their methods of book procurement. Funds were limited and collections grew at a snail's pace, relatively speaking. Nevertheless, each library was regarded as a completely independent entity, its development proceeding with little or no consideration of its neighbors, and it was reliant upon its own resources except for an occasional inter-library loan.

Establishment of the National Union Catalog in 1900, and publication of the *Union List of Serials in Libraries of the United States and Canada* in 1927, were the first major evidences of a change of direction. Thenceforth, librarians began to think of their holdings within a larger frame of reference, as segments of a national resource, the sharing of which could be of immense mutual benefit. Perhaps the coming of the Great Depression in the nineteen thirties expedited the process, when such cooperative enterprises were born as the regional bibliographic centers in Denver, Philadelphia, and Seattle, along with numerous local and state union catalogs.

Not until after World War II was there any major effort undertaken toward joint or coordinated acquisition. The first was the Cooperative Acquisitions Project for Wartime Publications, sponsored by the Library of Congress, which demonstrated several facts: American libraries could look to their national library for leadership in large cooperative activities; research libraries were able and willing to support a broad program for the improvement of library resources; the idea of libraries combining for the acquisition of research materials was feasible and desirable; and the research resources of American libraries were a matter of national concern.

Following close on the heels of the Library of Congress Project for

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Wartime Publications, and profiting from the experience gained in that program, came the Association of Research Libraries' Farmington Plan. The beginning, in 1948, was modest, comprising only publications issued in three Western European nations: France, Sweden, and Switzerland. Within five years, however, the Farmington Plan's scope was worldwide.

A natural outgrowth of the Farmington Plan was the Public Law 480 program administered by the Library of Congress. In 1961, the Congress authorized the expenditure of counterpart funds or blocked currencies for the acquisition of multiple copies of publications in certain countries where surplus funds had accumulated. The program presently includes Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Israel, Nepal, Pakistan, the United Arab Republic, and Yugoslavia. Millions of copies of books, pamphlets, periodicals, newspapers, and government publications have been procured and distributed to several hundred American libraries since inception of the project.

Another area of the world was covered, starting in 1959, by the Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Project (LACAP) in which some forty libraries are currently participating, utilizing commercial channels.

Also productive have been cooperative acquisition undertakings by smaller groups of institutions. An example is the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Activities—the University of Illinois, Indiana University, Michigan State University, and University of Wisconsin—which has provided funds for sending library staff members on collecting expeditions to the Far East, Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The representatives not only procured substantial quantities of material that in all likelihood would otherwise have been unavailable, but also established useful contacts with book dealers, publishers, and librarians abroad.

Sending its agents abroad is an old story, of course, to the Library of Congress with its global collecting activities, and scarcely less so to a number of other individual institutions, such as Stanford University's Hoover Institution Library, Northwestern University Library (chiefly to Africa), and the University of California (especially to the Far East).

Thus, with the rich background of experience gained from the Cooperative Acquisitions Project for Wartime Publications, the Farmington Plan, the Latin American Cooperative Acquisition Project, the Public Law 480 program, and its long-time procurement activities

abroad, the Library of Congress was fully prepared to take advantage of special provisions in the Higher Education Act of 1965. This was the enabling legislation for the immensely important National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging.

The specific provision is contained in Title II, Part C, entitled "Strengthening College and Research Library Resources," of the Higher Education Act of 1965, reading as follows:

There are hereby authorized to be appropriated \$5,000,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1966, \$6,315,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1967, and \$7,770,000 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1968, to enable the commission to transfer funds to the Librarian of Congress for the purpose of (1) acquiring, as far as possible, all library materials currently published throughout the world which are of value to scholarship; and (2) providing catalog information for these materials promptly after receipt, and distributing bibliographic information by printing catalog cards and by other means, and enabling the Library of Congress to use for exchange and other purposes such of these materials as are not needed for its own collections.<sup>1</sup>

The program as it developed has had the dual purpose of building up the collections of the Library of Congress, as the national library, thereby benefiting libraries in general, and of providing catalog information to meet the needs of other libraries. It was agreed that all titles with an imprint date of 1966 or later and all titles listed in current foreign national bibliographies, regardless of imprint date, would be eligible for acquisition and cataloging under the program. Further, the program would cover all monographic publications, trade and non-trade; annuals, including reports, yearbooks, proceedings, and transactions; selected foreign dissertations; atlases; and government publications, if they met the criteria. Periodicals and non-book materials, however, were not to be included at the outset.

Other significant aspects of the program as it related to acquisitions included the use of air mail to expedite deliveries; continuation of the Library of Congress' existing acquisition policy as it dealt with the purchase of books; blanket order arrangements with certain foreign book dealers; orders for all Farmington Plan titles; and the establishment of acquisition centers in areas where the book trade is not well-organized and where there is no national bibliography. To provide reasonable assurance of complete coverage, the Library of Congress supplied to each of a group of libraries for control purposes copies

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of catalog cards printed for current imprints; the cooperating libraries, in turn, were expected to send to the Library of Congress copies of their orders for current domestic and foreign acquisitions for which no catalog card could be found in the control file or in the published National Union Catalog.

Until congressional appropriations make possible full implementation of the National Program for Acquisitions and Cataloging (NPAC), the complete coverage visualized by the originators of the plan will be delayed, but it is apparent that in the foreseeable future the world's publishing output, promptly after it comes off the press, will be coming to the United States cataloged at home or abroad and ready for use. Within their respective spheres, the National Agricultural Library and the National Library of Medicine are active participants in the over-all program.

The question may properly be asked: Will the NPAC eventually supersede the Farmington Plan, LACAP, and similar efforts at cooperative acquisition? The answer is definitely in the negative. For insurance purposes alone, it will continue to be desirable to acquire more than one copy of every worthwhile book issued abroad and to decentralize locations. In a nation with a population in excess of 200,000,000, spread over a huge geographical area, among whom are tens of thousands of scholars, scientists, and research workers and millions of students, there is a clear and present need for multiple copies of materials of value to scholarship. Also, ready availability is an important factor. As Fremont Rider pointed out years ago, in *The Scholar and the Future of the Research Library*, "On one point they [scholars] all seem to be amazingly unanimous: they all seem to have a desire . . . to have their research materials available, not in New York or California, but under their own finger tips wherever they may happen to be working."<sup>2</sup>

The concept of collecting in the national interest is being furthered, too, by a relatively new type of institution, best exemplified by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) in Chicago. The CRL was founded twenty years ago as the Midwest Inter-Library Center, to serve two main functions: to house and service little-used research materials for member libraries, and to purchase selected materials for cooperative use. After reorganization in 1965, the Center changed from a regional to a national, indeed to an international, institution, since there are several Canadian members, and adopted its present name. As of 1969, the institutional membership numbered thirty-eight,

spread from coast to coast. Over the past four years, the Center's acquisition funds have grown from \$43,000 to \$404,000, based chiefly on current membership assessments and federal government grants.

By definition, the Center for Research Libraries concentrates its collecting activities on highly-specialized, little-used materials. Thus, it has assembled, for example, the most complete collection of foreign dissertations in the United States and maintains extensive holdings of foreign and domestic newspapers on film, foreign government publications, college catalogs, state documents, Russian Academy of Sciences documents, and textbooks. For about the past fifteen years, that is starting in 1956, supported by grants from the National Science Foundation, the Center has subscribed to several thousand rarely held serials included in *Chemical Abstracts* and *Biological Abstracts*.

From the point of view of the acquisition policies and programs of the individual member libraries, the principal value of such an organization as the Center for Research Libraries is to relieve them of responsibility for collecting a variety of fringe materials, expensive to acquire, seldom needed, and filling valuable space, but perhaps important when wanted.

Effective July 1, 1969, the CRL Board of Directors specified that regular and continued use of the Center's materials could be made only by members of the Center, effectively restricting loans, with occasional exceptions, to institutions providing financial support.

On a much smaller scale, the Hampshire Inter-Library Center in Amherst, Massachusetts, established in 1961, serves purposes similar to those of the CRL. The participating institutions are Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges, the University of Massachusetts, and the Forbes Library in Northampton. The Hampshire Center was set up to purchase and store jointly-owned research materials. Its primary collecting interests are current and retrospective serial files and monumental sets.

For decades, university and research librarians have been pursuing a type of cooperation which has often turned out to be a will-of-the-wisp, i.e., specialization of fields. Acquisition agreements among libraries appear, theoretically at least, to be a logical alternative to the impossible goal of trying to collect everything. Skeptics who question the feasibility of dividing fields have frequently had their doubts justified by problems of distance and communication and by institutional intransigence. One can, of course, point to notable exceptions: Duke University and the University of North Carolina, Columbia

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University and the New York Public Library, Newberry and the John Crerar Libraries, etc., and the Farmington Plan is a successful example of specialization of collecting interests among the sixty or more participating libraries. It is realistic to expect, however, that university libraries will have to duplicate extensively the holdings of other libraries; otherwise, they will seriously inconvenience their faculties and students.

The success of programs of library cooperation in universities, it ought to be recognized, must depend principally upon over-all institutional attitudes, especially in the willingness to rationalize graduate and research activities. Libraries can hardly move farther or faster in inter-institutional agreements than their parent universities are willing to go. Universities must specify in detail, therefore, their fields of primary interest prior to having their libraries reach understandings for specialization.

Virtually every state in the union has seen the mushrooming of its institutions of higher education during recent years. Former agricultural and mechanical colleges and teachers colleges have been transformed, almost overnight, to the status of general universities. The financial implications for the states are staggering, if these expanded institutions are to become universities in fact as well as in name. A major item of cost is library expansion, including the building of university-level collections. Can the states afford to permit each library to grow separately and independently? Is it realistic to expect that state legislatures will provide the high-level support required for building strong university libraries? Is it feasible for state-supported university libraries to work together to bring maximum library service to their users at costs somewhere within reason?

It is in response to such questions as these that an intriguing proposal was made and is under consideration in the state of North Carolina. The plan, in brief, would be to centralize highly-specialized collections, rather than dispersing them over the fifteen state university and senior college libraries. The logical location for such a central facility, to be shared by all institutions, would be the Chapel Hill-Durham-Raleigh area, since the state's principal library resources are already to be found there. There would be established, separate from any existing library, a state-wide depository collection, which in addition to containing specialized holdings beyond the ordinary needs of the participating libraries would provide bibliographic services in the form of a revision and expansion of the North Carolina Union Catalog,

through teletype connections among the libraries, and through rapid delivery service from the central facility and from campus to campus.

According to the proposal as visualized, the entire library research resources of the state would eventually be united to serve all students, scholars, and general researchers. There would continue, of course, to be special subject-oriented collections developed in individual institutions, complementing and supplementing the central depository. Bibliographic access to such collections would be provided through the North Carolina Union Catalog. The primary aim would be the creation of a cooperative service with a communications and transportation network assuring the availability of all resources to all legitimate users.

The sharing of library collections could be greatly expedited if telefacsimile systems were perfected, both to make the equipment more economical and more efficient. Even now, at least one library system, that of Pennsylvania State University, finds it advantageous to operate a telefacsimile service on a state-wide basis. That system's most recent annual report notes that telefacsimile equipment connects the University Park Library and eighteen scattered commonwealth campus libraries. When the telefacsimile network was first established, the decision was made to use the equipment only for the transmission of urgently needed material. That policy was found to be too restrictive, however, and commonwealth campus librarians are now permitted individual discretion—a change in procedure which it is believed will result in considerably more frequent and effective use of the telefacsimile equipment.

Inter-institutional agreements for sharing resources have been influenced to some degree by huge micro-reproduction projects, which continue to proliferate. Few libraries can afford or would desire to subscribe to all such undertakings. In some instances neighboring libraries have divided responsibility for particular projects, an economy move which still gives their clientele access to large bodies of specialized material. A new dimension has been added, however, with the Rand Corporation's proposal entitled *A Billion Books for Education in America and the World*<sup>3</sup> and the Encyclopaedia Britannica's announcement of a series of "Resource and Research Libraries" in ultramicrofiche. A library that subscribes to all the series which the Britannica plans to produce would possess a million volumes in ultramicrofiche form at a price which would not appear to be astronomical. Will this development make less attractive, or will it promote,

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the idea of inter-library cooperation, especially the division of fields? The incentive for collecting agreements may be lessened by the possibility of having virtually every book needed near at hand, even though in greatly reduced format.

Reproduction of material in full size is having a dramatic effect on library acquisition activities (i.e., publication in near-print form, by Xerox and photo-offset). Since the coming of Xerox, it has been stated that no book should be considered out of print, assuming that somewhere a copy is available for reproduction. The importance of this fact is accentuated by the requirements of the many new "instant" university libraries. In the past, it would have been virtually impossible for such libraries to have acquired the numerous basic periodical files, collections of primary sources, and reference works needed for a research library. The material had gone out of print and was simply unprocurable at any price. Within the past few years, reprinting has become big business. The 1969 edition of *Guide to Reprints* lists 183 firms which are engaged to a greater or lesser extent in reprint publishing, in the United States and abroad. Their productions include complete runs of general and special journals; society publications; bibliographical and other reference works; series dealing with special subjects, such as the Negro, law, theatre, American studies, criminology, and history of science; and innumerable individual book titles. Among the giants in the field are the AMS Press, Johnson Reprint Corporation, Kraus Reprint Company, Gregg International Publishers, Burt Franklin, Gale Research Company, and Slatkine Reprints.

A parallel development has been to make any items desired available on an individual basis, in microform or by Xerox "copy-flo" techniques. A leader in the field is the Xerox Corporation's University Microfilms, which is building up an immense stock of microfilms of titles in all fields, from which reproductions in microform or full scale can be supplied. This is not a publishing venture, but a service tailored to meet a particular need for single copies of out-of-print titles. In many instances, the reprints are on better paper and produced in better formats than the originals.

By way of summary, it should be noted that the world output of published material is increasing at a geometric rate, presenting research libraries with a dilemma of great dimensions in attempting to keep abreast of the flood. Beginning with World War II, the collecting concerns of American libraries, formerly largely restricted to the United States and Western Europe, have become worldwide. The



expanding library holdings are a direct response to the increased scholarly preoccupation with area studies. The outpouring of print in all its forms points toward an increased necessity for carefully defined acquisition policies, specialization of fields among libraries, and cooperative acquisition plans.

The solutions being found for the problems created by the information and publication explosion are imaginative and practical. Among the highlights are the Library of Congress' global acquisitions program, the Farmington Plan, the Public Law 480 program, the Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Project, the establishment of joint central facilities, such as the Center for Research Libraries, and agreements among individual libraries for divisions of fields of collecting.

The impact of technology on research libraries is accelerating. It is quite conceivable that libraries will eventually be linked together in an international network, drawing freely upon each others' resources and sharing in great central reservoirs. But even before such a day of wonders dawns, libraries are using technical progress and mechanisms to improve communications, e.g., by teletype; to speed transmission of materials between libraries, e.g., by telefacsimile (a device that is obviously in its infancy); and to reproduce in microfilm, microprint, microcard, microfiche, and ultramicrofiche and in standard reprint format vast quantities of research materials. The influence of such developments upon individual libraries is almost incalculable. One result, undoubtedly, will be that every piece of literature or bit of information in any library can be made readily available to the seeker after knowledge. The laissez faire philosophy which university librarians, in particular, have been inclined to follow, attempting to achieve virtual autonomy in wide areas of knowledge and to serve all the needs of their clientele without reference to other institutions, will call for drastic revision.

The richness and variety of American library resources are unsurpassed by those of any other nation. In an article for the *Encyclopedia Americana* on "One Hundred Notable Libraries of the World," the present writer concluded that thirty of the 100 are in the United States. The college and university libraries of the nation alone hold in excess of 300,000,000 volumes, and are growing at the rate of 25,000,000 volumes annually. To these impressive figures can be added the holdings of great reference libraries, hundreds of special libraries, and thousands of public libraries, providing users of Amer-

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ican libraries with bibliographical resources beyond compare. The users, however, will never be completely satisfied. They will constantly demand more.

### *References*

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